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Small Black Box is a performance and listening space dedicated to experimental music and sound art, held on the last Sunday of each month at the Institute of Modern Art in Brisbane, Australia.

Running continuously since May 2001, Small Black Box showcases underground and established artists who challenge both audiences and themselves, and serves as a continuing focal point for new music in Queensland.

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2004 SEASON

Institute of Modern Art

Judith Wright Centre for Contemporary Arts, Brunswick Street, Fortitude Valley, Brisbane, Australia.

All boxes 7-10pm, \$7 entry.

Small Black Box #32 - Sunday 29 February 2004

The Slippery Roger (electro-punk cabaret - Brisbane), SonicViz (real-time audiovisual composition - Brisbane), Attention Spanner (piano/drums improve - Armidale)

Small Black Box #33 - Sunday 28 March 2004

Fugal Quease (custom instruments and electroacoustics - UK) Anthony Pateras & Robin Fox (multi-speaker improve environments - Melbourne) and more...

Small Black Box #34 - Sunday 25 April 2004

Small Black Box #35 - Sunday 30 May 2004

Small Black Box #36 - Sunday 27 June 2004

Small Black Box #37 - Sunday 25 July 2004

Small Black Box #38 - Sunday 29 August 2004

Small Black Box #39 - Sunday 26 September 2004

Small Black Box #40 - Sunday 31 October 2004

Small Black Box #41 - Sunday 28 November 2004

Small Black Box #42 - Sunday 19 December 2004

SMALL BLACK BOX CREW

Scott Sinclair coordinator, webmaster | **Greg Jenkins** coordinator | **Luke Jaaniste** official writer, publications

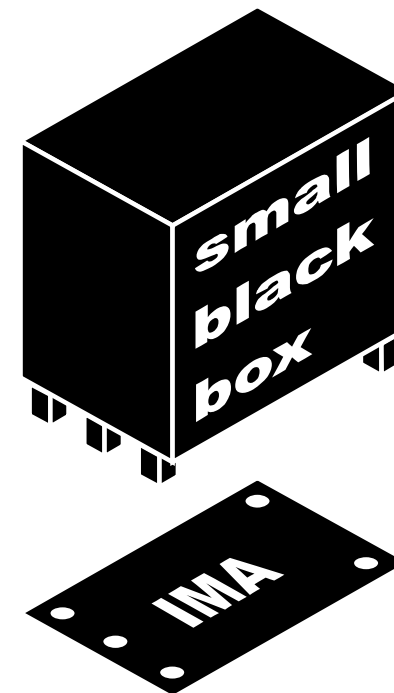
Joe Musgrove assistant coordinator | **Lloyd Barrett** assistant coordinator | **David Loose (Hydatid)** technical manager



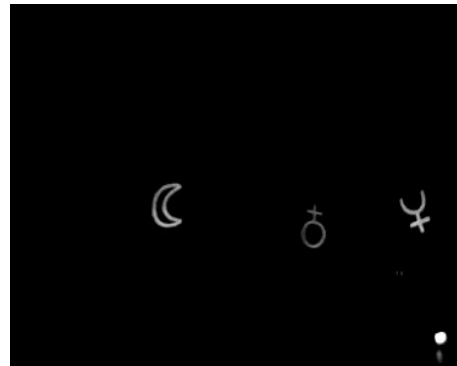
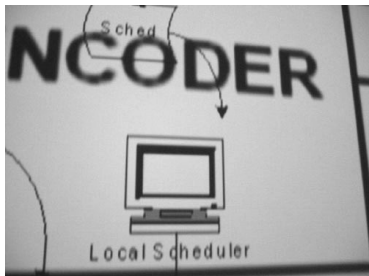
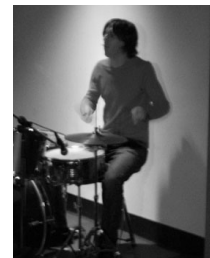
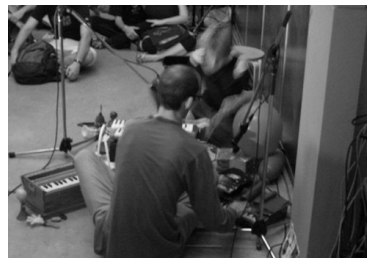
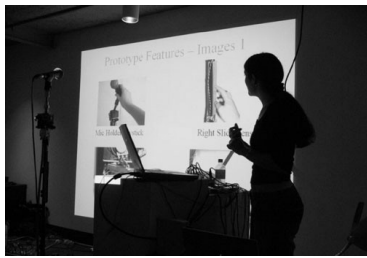
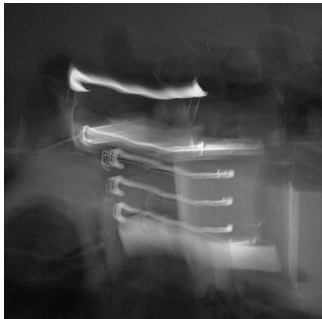
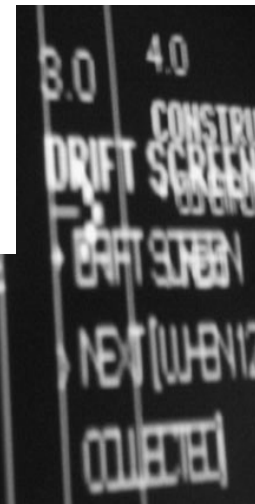
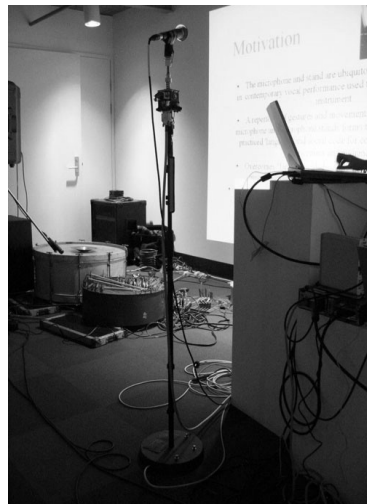
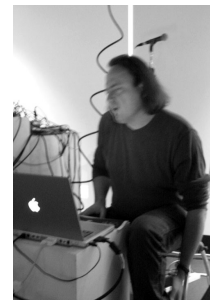
The Queensland Government, through Arts Queensland, has provided \$4200 to Small Black Box for experimental musicians and sound artists to present and develop new and innovative works at the Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane. Small Black Box wishes to thank the Institute of Modern Art for its ongoing support.

this was music...

a retrospective of Small Black Box in 2003



www.smallblackbox.com.au



SELECTED REVIEWS

SMALL BLACK BOX #22 - 30 March 2003

Axel Brandle - Budgeryduck - Manhandle Spiders

Review by Andrew Tuttle

This review is from Andrew Tuttle's Rocket In The Pocket webzine - <http://connect.to/rocketinthepocket/>

Opening the evenings proceedings is an synchronised audio/visual piece by **Axel Brandle**. In contrast to the electro-pop stylings of his collaborative troupe Team Plastique, Brandle's solo material hints at a more contemplative ambience; with synth patches, drones and manipulated guitars creating an atmosphere of understated warmth. The visuals accompanying the aural component of the performance are equally impressive, with chopped-up and flowing water, swimming and the naked body (with the occasional subversive message crawled on Microsoft Paint) lending an element of timelessness and beauty to proceedings.

In a departure from his beat-driven work as 4 Layers Of 9, Ross Manning tonight creates a melange of noise created by toys under the moniker **Budgeryduck**. Budgeryduck's performance ranges from a glitchy real-time manipulation of a toy keyboard, to washes and layers of white noise developed through the use of effects, and an almost-possessed hold on a number of telephones to exorcise layers of static. Budgeryduck to his credit is able to substitute the gimmickry aspect out of toys within music for manipulation of sound, that whilst is playful also is fascinating on an artistic level.

The **Manhandle Spiders** lineup of Gordon Duguid and Dani Kirby is supplemented by an appearance by noiseman around town Scott Sinclair. Manhandle Spiders' performance appears to be largely improvised, blending an array of ambient textures and noise assaults within a combination of organics and electronics. Kirby's voice is stunning, with an underlying fragile beauty that manages never to overpower the soundscapes, but instead to blend into them. Her vocals also seem to be fed through a number of effects, enabling a sense of quirkiness that lends itself to the piece as a whole. The visual accompaniment to the aural performance also proves to fit in with the overall ambience of the performance. Visuals range from a series of lines intersecting across the screen, to slowly moving montages which oddly enough bring to mind the movie 'Gladiator' through a common ground of rustic imagery.

BOX #26 - 27 July 2003

Camilla Hannan - resi-quat - Machina aux Rock

Review by Keith Gallasch

Review copyright RealTime (www.realtimearts.net)

SERIOUS LISTENING

It's Sunday night, eyes shut and heads down in the packed, tiny screening theatre at the IMA—time for some serious 'evensong' listening, minus the hymning along. At the International Critics' Symposium the week before a disgruntled music critic quizzed my celebration of the multimedia skills of contemporary artists, asking "But with all these screens and installations, is anyone actually listening anymore?" I wish she could have been at Small Black Box. She would not have liked it but she would have seen listening.

The audience is young and responsive. Greg Jenkins and Andrew Kettle are amiable hosts. There's a sense of occasion and community. Small Black Box is an important part of the Australian sound culture scene, promoting local artists in the context of a national big picture. Tonight **Camilla Hannan** from Melbourne opens with a dense, surround sound composition for 6 speakers, a spatial journey built from sounds the artist has collected from various environments. This is not sound heard from a distance: it's loud and you are in it and only occasionally do you think you recognise what you're hearing. Huge rushes, machine ratchetings, profound jack-hammering, high static deepening into an invasion of cicadas, a scary heavy shuffle, an escalating beat, huge hollow resonances and eerie glissandi follow one another until the work becomes quite musical, a high whistle winding over a recurrent thump building to an apocalyptic 'Age of the Machines' movie soundtrack which dissolves into the reassuring banality of the clack of a passing train.

Local artist **resi-quat** (aka Adam Park) presents a cassette tape collage, his fingers darting across an assemblage of old tape decks in a lo-tech venture with the impact of the radio-dial-twiddling variety of sound art. It's like being stuck in a time loop, a nostalgic, muddy archive with chunks of advertisements and Hawaiian guitar—the incantation of 'high seven cholesterol' and 'you're feeling good and you're feeling tense' providing a faintly ironic thematic anchor. Later this detritus almost totally transforms into a more articulated sound field, noise with a kind of cosmic feel in tune with the endlessly repeated sci-fi-ish animations projected throughout (eyes shut for me).

The seats are cleared for Melbourne's **Machina aux Rock** and a few coloured lights begin to pulse. Nat Bates on electronics and Stephen Masterson on drums

what he did at the "Not Grey Walls" back in March in the Judith Wright shopfront.

Everyone was ushered into an unlighted room which was bare except for three televisions with a video camera pointed at each of them. For twenty minutes we sat there in the dark while the machines were left to their devices. A low-level drone which swooped and glided through various frequencies was created while shapeless images remained static on the screens. Very nice indeed. Humans, who needs them?

Then we were sent back out to the foyer for the performance of the Australian-American two-piece **Clocked Out Duo** who two releases and shows at various avant-fests on their CV. Like UK artists Richard Youngs & Simon-Wickham Smith, The Shadow Ring and Ashtray Navigations they create improv based around the use of non-amplified instruments.



Clocked Out Duo

The array of instruments used on that evening was quite phenomenal. Squeeze organ, balloon, whistles, metal suspended in water, the list goes on and on. The sounds they created went from the frantic to the subdued. One could not help to watch what they were doing as they went from one sound device to another. A folk traditionalist would have fainted in horror. Clocked Out Duo demonstrated the validity of creating new sounds from traditional instrumentation.

Now it was time to go back to the second half of **Luke Jaaniste's** sound installation. Again we were all seated in the dark. This time we saw a more active interaction between Luke and the machinery. Playing about with the video cameras the sounds Luke created were more discordant with the images being more than reminiscent of the swirling patterns of sixties "Doctor Who" title sequences which were created via the means of a camera-monitor feedback loop. It should be interesting to see what Luke does next.

We all trumped back out to the foyer for the final act of the evening **Archimedia** who engage in culture jamming (a term coined by Negativland) using appropriated samples and footage in a symbiotic sound/visual landscape to critique aspects of Western society. The work they presented was called "Lost Cities Redux: Homage To Baghdad" which interrogated the West and it's invasion of Iraq which in my opinion seems to be turning into America's new Vietnam.

Overall it was a barrage. Using cut up patriotic marches and stock market reports among other things combined with various pulses and hums generated by laptops in conjunction with a multiplicity of images like a drowned metropolis and fighter craft targeting footage Archimedia presented a thought provoking soundfest which engaged all of the senses.

Then it was over. All in all a nice little prelude to "Make It Now: Mini Festival Of Australian Improvised Music" to be held next month in November. Now that should be interesting.

MORE SELECTED REVIEWS

SMALL BLACK BOX #28 - 28 September 2003
Christine McCombe - Cleaning Lady - Jim Denley
Review by Rigel Sirius

Small Black Box pulled off another great combination of experimental electronic music on Sunday 28 September that ranged from the electroacoustic polish of Christine McCombe to the raw technical indeterminacy of Stephen Richards (aka Cleaning lady) and the woodwind virtuosity of Jim Denley. An almost capacity crowd turned out for the concert, in what is almost habitual packed attendance at SBB concerts.

First out of the block was **Christine McCombe** who presented two pieces of luscious electroacoustic music accompanied by subdued video. The first piece was contemplative and explored sounds and images of the waterfront. Its smooth and graduated progressions from calm moments to intense waves of sample polyphony was in the tradition of acousmatic French works, but mostly reminiscent of British interpretations of the same. McCombe's second piece was an exploration of the sonic variety of harpsichord and significantly treated samples of that instrument. This work started with timbres characteristic of string sounds, but obfuscated by the masking of their attack transients. It ebbed and flowed between luscious and dramatically noisy sections, exploring the range of periodic and noisy sounds of the harpsichord. The control over form and structure made this piece stand out from much of the meandering improvisation often heard in experimental concerts. The only blemish was the sometimes excessive use of untreated harpsichord performance samples that at time disrupted the otherworldly space created by the work.

Next on the menu was Stephen Richards (aka Cleaning Lady) visiting from Melbourne, who treated us to a session of analogue noise and sample processing. Visually stimulating, Richard's performance employed a vast array of inexpensive gadgets which he manipulated with significant dexterity. The work was quite minimal on the whole, which varied between tedious and wonderful. His manipulation of electronic signal, a variety of prepared samples and delay and distortion processes

had a distinctive style, however, the spatialisation treatment was hampered by unsympathetic jumps between speakers resulting from bus send switching. This performance was well received by the SBB audience, always partial to a noise improvisation.



Cleaning Lady

The final, and much anticipated act was **Jim Denley**, performing signal processed flutes (alto, soprano and piccolo) and voice. If the audience were expecting sustained flute tones, they were in for a surprise as Denley proceeded with one of the most percussive woodwind performances you are likely to hear. The performance material consisted of key taps, noise bursts and vocal sounds in the main, all processed in real time though several instances of GRM Tools which provided long delays, shimmering phase shifts and the whole soundscape tastefully reverberated and spatialised. The piece provided sufficient variety through changes in instruments and vocal sound types, although the minimal processing was largely unchanged but switched in and out from time to time. The performance was highly polished but its minimalist textural shifts did tend to demand concerted effort from the audience at times.

The whole show was very ably compared by Scott Sinclair, who more than adequately filled the shoes in the absence of regular presenter Greg Jenkins, and the technical aspects of sound reinforcement were appropriately transparent to the audience. The SBB crew and performers are to be congratulated on another varied but rarely dull concert.

SMALL BLACK BOX #30 - 26 October 2003
Luke Jaaniste - Archimedia - Clocked Out Duo
Review by Jamie Hume

"Television is the retina of the mind's eye."
('Videodrome', David Cronenberg, 1982)

On this night the performances were split between the IMA foyer and the screening room.

First of all we were all directed to the screening room for the first part of **Luke Jaaniste's** sound installation. The piece being presented that night was an extension of facing each other across the space whip up an acoustic-electronic exchange ("Stephen plays drums that trigger Nat's noise gates, which in turn pass bursts of electric guitar and bass textures, the overall sound being processed and shaped live by Nat." Program note). Earplugs have been handed out in the intermission. The piece moves from minimal to orchestral in character and density with the performers becoming physically more vigorous. Bells and gongs and gritty organ sounds manifest out of nowhere. After the final visceral assault (Bates pogoing and the drummer slowing to a near halt in visual and aural counterpoint) the sounds swoops and dives into silence.



Andrew Garton

It's been a night of engaging performances of very different kinds, from the contemplative to the performative, and all offering rich imaginative spaces to the alert listener. It was a good move on the part of QBFM to include Small Black Box and Liquid Architecture 4 in its program—there are links with other parts of the festival and certainly shared soundworlds with Heiner Goebbels' symphonic Surrogate Cites.

SMALL BLACK BOX #27 - 30 August 2003
Phuquelica - Rene Wooller - Toy Satellite
Review by Lloyd Barrett

WORKING BACKWARDS...

Andrew Garton concluded the night, conducting a symphony of GPS data through midi devices along with pre-defined video and violinist accompaniment. It is nice to see someone else working in the realm of situationist ideas but there is plenty to criticise in his methods. The overall sound seemed rather thin focused primarily on mid to high-band frequencies. The SBB environment seems well sorted for BASS so it may not be so much Andrew's fault however I thought the integration with the violinist could have been achieved more effectively.

I'm not sure whether any of Justina Curtis' violin was processed but it seemed to primarily consist of random jagged noises which were occasionally successful in breaking up the twee saw teeth and squares. The video was interesting to watch with many layers of site-specific footage, installation work and the flashing up of slogans which...hang on a minute? Didn't U2 do that?!?! I think Toy Satellite provided the most balanced set overall; unchallenging but Andrew is exploring interesting territory and I will still return with interest to check his results.

What makes experimental music? At what point do you say..."Nah mate...that's techno!" I pondered this whilst witnessing **Rene Wooller's** set, which sonically transported me to the sounds of early 90's Orbital. Rene is working on an experimental piece of software (don't ask me what it does - perhaps he should have demonstrated) and seemed to be having some difficulty. Strange though it may seem, I thought the most interesting sounds came from his midi-controller issues; like a child making a dam with his foot in a drain, the midi notes would choke up and then fire in a raging torrent. Partially successful, I think Rene could have lost the video which was repetitive, pointless and annoying (how often do we need to see someone swallow a bug?)

As the host of Audiopollen (Wed nights 11pm - 4ZZZ - haha - quick plug!) I am in the position of encouraging developing artists. I think that there is a LOT of talent out there and places like Small Black Box are perfect for nurturing that talent. Talent however is not something that is just given. From **Phuqelica's** bio it seems to me that they don't care whether anyone likes them or not. Well that's fine - I don't! As my esteemed colleague Joe Musgrove once said "People shouldn't be worried about not being any good when they start - that's why it is called starting". I do think it is important that they WANT to start and not that they are doing it because they have to for some kind of university assessment. With the gear provided they had the makings of an interesting set - laptop, chaos pad type effects and electronic drums. Directionless Improv music is one thing - but couple this with a vibe of general apathy and inability to do anything more than nauseatingly replay tired vocal samples, fiddle about and drum along sloppily; makes me wonder why the hell they are in the spotlight when staring at the bored fish-like audience is more interesting. Hey, I think I just answered my question. I'm going to go out of my way to discourage them from ever attempting to do anything "weird" and "experimental" ever again.

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29 November 2003

EMP (Electronic Music Performance Symposium)
Presented by QUT Music as part of Make It Now
Screening Room, IMA

: **Greg Jenkins**
: **Yanto Browning & Neil Baxter**
: **Olivia Pisani, Amber Hansen & Tahlee Roullion**
: **Benn Woods**
: **Tim Opie**
: **Llyod Barrett**
: **Andy Lonsdale**
: **Rene Wooller**
: **Paul Cohen**
: **Donna Hewitt***
: **Matt Wiemers**
: **Jim Denley***

29-30 November 2003

SMALL BLACK BOX #30
MAKE IT NOW - Mini Festival of Improvised Music
Various venues, IMA

29 November 2003 - Evening Session

: **Clare Cooper, Natasha Anderson^, Robbie Avenaim*, Vanessa Tomlinson**
: **Joel Stern^, Scott Sinclair, Erik Griswold, Alison Blunt +**
: **Lawrence English, Anthony Pateras^, Jim Denley*, Joe Musgrove**
: **artists combined**

30 November 2003 - Afternoon Session

: **The Lost Domain (Simon Ellaby, David Mackinnon, Rick Neville, Eugene Carchesio, Leighton Craig)**
: **Faber Castell (Alan Nyugen, Ross Manning)**
: **Lawrence English, Clare Cooper*, Robbie Avenaim*, Jason Elliot**
: **Robert Davidson, Lindsay Vickery#, Darren Moore^, Erik Griswold**
: **Jim Denley*, Scott Sinclair**
: **The Perfect Lovers (Michael Baker, Jamie Hume, Adam Park, Cheryl Siecker, Mark Skelton, Donat Tahiraj) with Greg Wadley**

30 November 2003 - Evening Session

: **Natasha Anderson^, Greg Jenkins, Alison Blunt**
: **MoonPatrol (Tony MacDonald, Michael Leo)**
: **Hedkikr (Lindsay Vickery#, Darren Moore^)**
: **Anthony Pateras^, Tim Opie, Rene Wooller**
: **Bryan Bird, Jason Elliot**
: **Joe Musgrove, Joel Stern^, Lloyd Barrett**

21 December 2003

SMALL BLACK BOX #31
Screening Room, IMA
Severin Minus Seven (Simon Marsh)
Jasper Streit *
Zane Trow

IMA = Institute of Modern Art
Interstate Guests = *Sydney ^Melbourne #Perth
International Guests = +London

R
G

26 Jan
SMALL
The St
: **Hyd**
: **Lalil**

23 Feb
SMALL
Screen
: **Kunt**
: **Bou**
Musgr
: **Biffp**

30 Mar
SMALL
Screen
: **Axel**
: **Budg**
: **Man**
Scott

27 Apr
SMALL
Screen
: **The**
: **The**
Morris
: **Proj**
Came
: **Patr**

25 May
SMALL
Specia
Theatr
: **Alan**
: **Dary**
: **Kett**

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